



Connecting U.P. Traffic Safety Professionals

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## MEET LT. THOMAS RANTA AND THE MICHIGAN STATE POLICE MOTOR CARRIER DIVISION

**D**o those big commercial trucks on the highway scare you? Well, relax and breathe easy...the Michigan State Police Motor Carrier Division is out on the road each and every day to ensure our safety. Meet Lt. Thomas Ranta and his dedicated crew of motor carrier officers who are committed to making U.P. roadways safe.

In the Upper Peninsula, there are 13 motor carrier officers working out of eight Michigan State Police posts. Each day, officers enforce speed limits, conduct inspections of school buses and commercial vehicles, enforce size and weight limits, inspect hazardous material carriers, verify driver qualifications, and follow-up on complaints against companies in violation of safety issues. The Motor Carrier Division also investigates fatal crashes involving commercial motor vehicles and provides traffic crash reconstruction assistance to local law enforcement agencies. Motor carrier officers have full police powers in dealing with commercial vehicles and have the authority to arrest any individual operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

In 2001, the Michigan State Police Motor Carrier Division completed 39,626 truck inspections statewide, and cited over 3,000 weight violations, 8,100 speed violations and wrote a total of 36,547 citations to commercial motor vehicles. They also completed 18,200 school bus inspections throughout the state. In the Upper Peninsula, over 2,700 trucks were inspected and approximately 1,600 citations were written for violations of size and weight limits, speeding, defective equipment, and other moving offenses.

While some passenger car drivers may feel uncomfortable driving around big trucks, statewide crash statistics reveal that passenger car error has been the cause of 70 percent of fatal crashes involving commercial motor vehicles. [See



Tips for Sharing the Road with Trucks, p.6.] To stay on the road, commercial truck drivers are held to strict safety standards. For example, all commercial vehicle drivers must possess a Commercial Driver License (CDL), meet physical requirements, have a medical exam every two years, and submit to mandatory drug and alcohol testing. Trucks and equipment are inspected annually.

In addition to enforcement, the Motor Carrier Division dedicates time for education. Officers collaborate with judges, magistrates, and law enforcement agencies keeping them updated on changes in regulations and violations. Ranta works with the trucking industry and meets regularly with many groups including the Michigan Wisconsin Timber Producer's Association, MI Association of Timbersmen, U.P. Road Builders (county road commissions), and major U.P. corporations, such as MEAD, International Paper, and Louisiana Pacific. Training seminars are provided throughout the year, and a Logging Congress is held annually to supply the logging industry with information and material on safety requirements.

*continued on page 3.*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Welcome .....	2
Upcoming Events .....	2
U.P. Happenings .....	2
Safe Communities News .....	3
Off the Beaten Path .....	3
The "Work Zone" Michigan Center for Truck Safety U.P. Office .....	4
Above the Bridge Survey Results .....	4
Two U.P. Winners Click it or Ticket Equipment Challenge .....	5
The U.P. Traffic Safety Committee (UPTSC) Wants You! .....	5
You Drink & Drive. You Lose. News Conference and Enforcement Kick-Off .....	5
Resource Center .....	5
Tips for Sharing the Road with Trucks .....	6
U.P. Officer Recognized .....	6

# WELCOME

It's February, and the winter doldrums are upon us. Even if you are a native "yooper," it is easy to find yourself dreaming of escaping to a sunny, warm climate, with sandy beaches and tropical music, palm trees swaying as the ocean gently "whooshes" onto the shore...Ah, Paradise...(If anyone knows of some cheap airfare, let us know!)

The reality of freezing temps, howling winds and endless snow to shovel can be disheartening, but have cheer! The nasty weather is a great excuse to curl up with this issue of "Above the Bridge" and a steaming cup of hot coffee.

You may notice a slightly different format to our newsletter. We were delighted with the response to our survey and are incorporating some of the suggestions you submitted. Because the "Meet Your Peer" column received high marks, we are also incorporating a "Work Zone" column that will introduce you to a different partner agency each quarter. You have probably heard about the Michigan Center for Truck Safety, but do you really know what they do? Our article will give you the "inside scoop" about the valuable resources available right here in our backyard!

The "Click It or Ticket" and "You Drink and Drive. You Lose." law enforcement mobilizations were conducted this past November and December. A record number of law enforcement agencies across the state pledged to participate, including 32 in the Upper Peninsula. The Michigan State Police Posts at Manistique and Wakefield were chosen through a drawing of all participants to win their choice of \$5,000 worth of traffic safety equipment or overtime. If you haven't signed up, it's not too late! There will be two more mobilizations during this fiscal year—one during Memorial Day and one during the 4th of July. Call our office for more details.

And while we're on the subject of the mobilizations, check out the data elsewhere in this issue from December's "You Drink and Drive. You Lose." event. Wow! Dedicated law enforcement officers sought to take a large number of drunk drivers off of the road. They accomplished their goal, and then some! Terrific job!

As always, give us a call if you have any ideas or suggestions, or stop by our office next to the "big red barn" in Marquette.

Stay warm!

Sincerely,



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## FEBRUARY

### 9-15 Child Passenger Safety Week

[www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

[www.buckleupamerican.org](http://www.buckleupamerican.org)

### 25-26 Michigan Truck Exposition and Safety Symposium

Sponsored by MI Trucking Association (MTA) and  
MI Center for Truck Safety

Lansing Center, Lansing

Call MTA at 517-321-1951 for details

## APRIL

### 7-11 National Work Zone Awareness Week

[www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

### 29-30 Michigan Traffic Safety Summit and Secondary Road Patrol Conference

Amway Grand Plaza, Grand Rapids

Call Sue Joseph at 517-333-5301

[JosephsI@michigan.gov](mailto:JosephsI@michigan.gov)

[www.michigan.gov/msp](http://www.michigan.gov/msp)

## MAY

### 19-June 1 Click it or Ticket Law Enforcement Mobilization

# U.P. HAPPENINGS

## U.P. Traffic Safety Committee Meeting

December 5, 2002

**M**SP Trooper Stacey Rasanen and Kathy Herrala of the Marquette County Commission on Aging presented a program on aging drivers. Rasanen explained that driving skills typically diminish as people age and discussed ways to approach the issue with respect and sensitivity. Rasanen reported that older drivers have a lower frequency of crashes and fatalities overall, however they have a higher rate of crashes and fatalities per mile driven. Tips for senior drivers include avoiding driving at night, in bad weather, and at rush hour. Other tips include planning routes in advance, utilizing intersections with left turn signals, and exercising regularly to meet the physical requirements of driving.

As people age they often experience a narrowing field of vision. Herrala described a new training tool housed at the Occupational Rehabilitation Unit in Marquette General Hospital that can improve a person's field of view. The training unit is a touch-screen computer that measures one's peripheral vision, how much, and how quickly we see. Areas needing improvement are identified and exercises are provided which actually strengthen one's field of view. For more information contact Kathy Herrala at the Marquette County Commission on Aging at 906-226-4180.

# SAFE COMMUNITIES NEWS

by Taryn Mack

U.P. Safe Communities Consultant • (906-482-4880)

Recently, I received a contract from the Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) to work as a U.P. Safe Communities Consultant. I have been working with Safe Community Coalitions in the Western Upper Peninsula for the past two years, and I coordinate a local MCRUD initiative in Baraga, Houghton and Keweenaw counties, and I provide support to local Children's Trust Fund councils as the U.P. Regional Coordinator. Also, over the past six months I have attended statewide Safe Communities Resource Consultant meetings, and I attended the Michigan Traffic Safety Summit in May. I'm excited to be involved with Safe Communities on a broader level, and to begin developing a U.P. Safe Communities Network that will enhance communication, provide sustainability and increase awareness of resources and programs to all U.P. Coalitions. I am eager to learn what you are doing, share the things I've learned and work with you to enhance your injury prevention efforts.

A training series is being developed and will be offered to U.P. Safe Communities Coalitions. The training series is designed to help strengthen your coalition and enhance injury prevention programming. We will also have a regular column in "Above the Bridge" to showcase your Safe Communities initiatives. Plans are underway for a U.P. Safe Communities' conference next fall.

I look forward to meeting with all Safe Communities Coalitions over the next several months to learn what you are doing, what your needs are, and what I can do to help you meet your Safe Communities goals.


## OFF THE BEATEN PATH



**We have  
left the U.P.**

**See you next issue  
and stay warm!**

**You Drink & Drive.  
YOU LOSE**



**MOBILIZATION  
RESULTS**

The December "You Drink and Drive. You Lose." law enforcement challenge resulted in 1,612 drunk drivers arrested during 88,550 patrol hours! During this mobilization, a total of 49,431 vehicles were stopped producing 809 felony arrests, 3,888 misdemeanor arrests, 12,393 speeding citations, and 3,734 safety belt/child restraint citations. Great job!

## LT. THOMAS RANTA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

The issue of log truck safety in the U.P. reached a critical juncture in January 1998. Logs spilled from a truck in Dickinson County and took the lives of Sigrid Ruth Jauquet and her two-year-old daughter Shayla. Within days of the crash, representatives from the logging industry contacted law enforcement and other interested groups to establish a Log Truck Safety Task Force. The common goal was to seek changes in how logs are hauled thus avoiding future tragedies.

Through the efforts of this task force, the Michigan Department of Transportation provided a \$100,000 grant to the Keweenaw Research Center at Michigan Technological University to study trailer styles and how logs are carried. As a result of this effort, safety issues continue to be identified and addressed. For example, air tightening devices are voluntarily put on the majority of logging trailers to secure logs, more turn out lanes have been created so truckers can stop to check their loads, and an on-going public awareness campaign educates passenger car drivers about driving safely around trucks.

Following the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the attention of the Motor Carrier Division was directed to homeland security issues. Over 1,000 hazardous materials inspections were conducted with special attention focused on drivers. While no suspected terrorist activities were found, several cases of possible fraud involving the issuance of Commercial Driver's Licenses were identified. Additionally, 445 Security Sensitivity Visits were conducted on all Michigan-based carriers of hazardous materials. Businesses were surveyed to identify vulnerabilities and to educate carriers on how to avoid having their employees or equipment involved in a breach of homeland security. Homeland security will continue to be a priority for the Motor Carrier Division in the future.

The Motor Carrier Division has a comprehensive role in maintaining the safety of the entire motoring public. After 28 years as a motor carrier officer, Ranta still finds satisfaction when one of his officers removes a truck from the road that has defective equipment or is being operated by an unqualified driver. "You could be saving a life. That's the bottom line." For more information on the Motor Carrier Division, you may contact Lt. Ranta at 906-225-7030.

# THE “WORK ZONE”

*(This new column will highlight a U.P. partner agency in each issue)*

## Michigan Center for Truck Safety Upper Peninsula Office

Steve Ojala, an employer of logging truck drivers, is concerned about the dangers of fatigued driving. Lois Smith, a commercial truck driver, would like to improve her braking skills and learn better skid control techniques. Jim Cooper, a driver's education instructor, is interested in information about safely sharing the road with trucks. Where can Steve, Lois, and Jim turn for help? They need only call Bob Ramels at the Upper Peninsula Office of the Michigan Center for Truck Safety (MCTS) located in Escanaba, Michigan.

MCTS is a grant-funded organization dedicated to highway safety through safer truck travel. The Center accomplishes this by educating both truck and car drivers on how to share the road more safely.

Among the many services provided are:

- Decision Driving Courses
- Mobile classroom
- Driver performance assessments
- Interactive video training programs
- Management specialists
- Truck safety hotline
- Fatigue management seminars
- High school driver education programs
- Hazardous material transportation education
- Free publications
- Presentations to civic clubs and other organizations
- “The Safety Scene” on-line newsletter

So, how did MCTS help Ojala, Smith, and Cooper? Ojala called MCTS and scheduled a fatigue seminar for his 20 employees. His staff learned to judge how tired they are, the similarities between fatigue and being under

the influence of alcohol, and most importantly how to prevent fatigue. Ojala found the seminar to be very beneficial and has now scheduled the MCTS Mobile Classroom to provide on-site training at his company. His employees will learn valuable information about winter driving, backing up, safety belts, air brakes, and hazardous materials.

**Lois was able to develop a number of essential skills on the skid pad: braking control on wet and dry surfaces, skid control techniques, off-road recovery, cornering, serpentine maneuvers jackknife control and recovery, evasive action exercises, and stopping distance factors.**

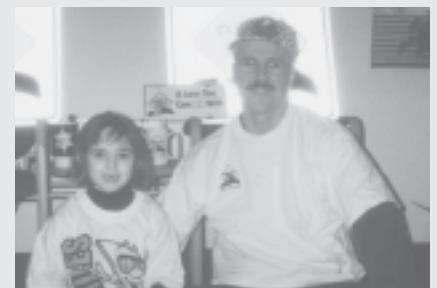
Smith enrolled in a one-day Upper Peninsula Decision Driving Course (UPDDC). Following a short session in the classroom, Lois was able to develop a number of essential skills on the skid pad: braking control on wet and dry surfaces, skid control techniques, off-road recovery, cornering, serpentine maneuvers, jackknife control and recovery, evasive action exercises, and stopping distance factors.

For information to use in his driver education courses, Cooper called MCTS and ordered publications on No-Zones and a video for teen drivers. He also scheduled a safety presentation for his civic group.

The Upper Peninsula division of the Michigan Center for Truck Safety provides a variety of valuable services free of charge to the U.P. community. The Decision Driving Course is available for a nominal fee of \$25. For more information on the MCTS, call Bob Ramels or Jan Charles, management specialist, at 1-800-469-7364 or 906-789-7657 or visit [www.truckingsafety.org](http://www.truckingsafety.org).

# Above the Bridge Survey Results

Thanks to all of you who responded to the Above the Bridge Customer Satisfaction Survey! We were jumping for joy by the response we got from our readers! Our files have now been updated with current addresses and name changes. Suggestions for future articles and other comments have been noted and will be implemented in future issues. Readers ranked the top features in the following order of importance: Resource Center, Feature Articles, Meet Your Peers, Upcoming Events, Human Interest Stories, U.P. Happenings, and Off the Beaten Path. Approximately half of our readers would like to receive the newsletter via e-mail and most would like to receive periodic e-mail updates on traffic safety issues. Again, we appreciate your feedback and will continually give consideration to reader comments.



*F/Lt. Frank Hentschell, Michigan State Police Post, Munising, and granddaughter Katelyn Lambert pose with their Click it or Ticket traffic safety prize package.*

Our survey prizewinner is MSP F/Lt. Frank Hentschell from the Munising Post!! Lt. Hentschell was selected via drawing from all of the respondents and received a outstanding selection of premium traffic safety incentives.

## Two U.P. WINNERS

### *Click it or Ticket* Equipment Challenge

The drawing for the Thanksgiving holiday *Click it or Ticket* enforcement mobilization was held on December 20. Congratulations to the Michigan State Police Manistique and Wakefield Posts who will each receive \$5,000 in either equipment or overtime. Remember to send in your statistics for the next safety belt challenge, scheduled May 19 to June 1. Twelve agencies will again be selected via drawing and statewide winners will include four municipal police agencies, four sheriff departments, and four state police posts. Agencies that participate in all four mobilizations will be eligible for regional and grand prize drawings, including the chance to win a new \$35,000 patrol car.

## The U.P. Traffic Safety Committee (UPTSC) Wants You!

Would you like to remain on the cutting edge of traffic safety in the U.P.?

Each quarter, the UPTSC, a group consisting of representatives from law enforcement, criminal justice, road commissions, public transportation, attorney general's office, etc. meets in Marquette from 10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. Special topics are presented and traffic safety advocates keep each other updated on the latest developments in the UP. If you are interested and would like to be added to the invitation list, please contact Lea Casper at OHSP at 906-225-7030. Lunch is provided by AAA of Michigan.



## NEWS CONFERENCE AND ENFORCEMENT KICK-OFF

December 17

Marquette area law enforcement hosted another successful "You Drink and Drive. You Lose." enforcement kick-off at Westwood Mall. Over 450 "mocktails" (non-alcoholic mixed drinks provided by AAA Michigan and the Marquette County Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention) were served to holiday shoppers. Law enforcement officers spoke with 75 additional shoppers in an effort to prevent drinking and driving this holiday season.

Betsy Harris of M.A.D.D. displayed the U.P. victim memorial board, a moving reminder of the tragedy of drinking and driving. Michigan State Police Trooper Andrew Rigling and Marquette County Deputy Todd Racine demonstrated the effects of alcohol impairment using

Fatal Vision Goggles. Mall-goers were able to wear the goggles and attempt to walk a straight line. Sgt. Don Peterman, NMU Public Safety, recruited hundreds of shoppers to sign a banner (co-sponsored by M.A.D.D.) pledging that they would not drink and drive over the holidays.

Serving mocktails were Ishpeming City Police Sgt. Bob Sibley, Marquette City Police Chief Phil Siegert, Marquette County Sheriff Mike Lovelace, Negaunee City Police Sgt. Steve Taylor and Michigan State Police Lt. Tony Benaglio. Meanwhile, Marquette City Police Capt. Skip Henderson unveiled the BAT Mobile to the public in the mall parking lot. Local television and newspaper outlets were on hand and provided coverage of the event.

## RESOURCE CENTER

With the focus on truck safety this issue, we have turned to the Michigan Center for Truck Safety (MCTS) for materials. Below you will find videos and brochures available through MCTS and the OHSP regional resource center.

### **Sharing the Road: Driving Safely Around Big Trucks (Mature Drivers)**

This informative 11-minute video targets the mature driving population and instructs how to drive safely around trucks. The video shows a regular citizen going on a ride-along with a truck driver and learning about blind spots, wide turns, merging, stopping distances and maneuverability.

### **Sharing the Road: Driving Safely Around Big Trucks (Teen Drivers)**

This 13-minute video portrays driver education students learning about topics such as No-Zones, merging, exiting, stopping distances, wide turns, and distracted driving.

### **No-Zone Brochures**

Learn about No-Zones and how to share the road with trucks.

For more information contact Lea Casper at 906-225-7030 ext. 240 or [casperl@state.mi.us](mailto:casperl@state.mi.us). For more information on truck safety visit the MCTS at [www.truckingsafety.org](http://www.truckingsafety.org) or call 906-789-7657 or 800-469-7364.

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## TIPS FOR SHARING THE ROAD WITH TRUCKS

**L**arge trucks do not operate like passenger vehicles as they have large blind spots, make wide turns, require greater braking distances, and are not as maneuverable as cars. A large truck on dry pavement driving 55 MPH needs over 335 feet to stop.

The most important safety tip for sharing the road is to stay out of the "No-Zones." Large trucks cannot see vehicles directly in front of them, behind them, or on each side. Protect yourself and your passengers by learning how to share the road with trucks.

- **Front No-Zone. Pass Safely.** Don't cut in front of a large truck too soon after passing. Look for the entire front of the truck in your rearview mirror before changing lanes...and then don't slow down!
- **Side No-Zone.** Don't "hang-out" on either side of trucks or buses. If you can't see the driver's face in his side-view mirror, then the driver can't see you.
- **Rear No-Zone. Avoid Tailgating.** Unlike cars, trucks and buses have huge No-Zones directly behind them. The truck or bus driver can't see you, and you can't see what's going on ahead of you.
- **Backing Up No-Zone. Pay Closer Attention.** Never cross behind a truck that is backing up! Hundreds of pedestrians are killed or injured each year by ignoring trucks backing up. Remember...truck drivers do not have a rear view mirror.
- **Wide Right Turns.** Avoid the "Squeeze Play." Truck and bus drivers sometimes need to swing wide to the left in order to make a right turn. They can't see cars squeezing in between them and the curb. Watch for their turn signals and give them room to turn.



## U.P. OFFICER RECOGNIZED

**M**otor Carrier Officer Daniel J. Litzner of the St. Ignace Post has been named the 2002 recipient of the "Motor Carrier Officer of the Year Award." Officer Litzner is being recognized for his outstanding enforcement efforts, leadership skills, community involvement, and personal ethics. Congratulations on a great achievement!

